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ABSTRACT

This book describes inquiry learning during a year-long classroom exploration with 4th graders, which began with setting up a bird feeder and a journal for students to record observations. The authors argue that schools have been organized to make things easy for learners, shielding them from the messiness, ambiguity, and change of intellectual ventures. This is the antithesis of what inquiry learning is about. Instead, the role of teachers is to highlight problems that learners encounter and support them in devising appropriate strategies and possible solutions to problems. Chapters are as follows: (1) "Inquiry Begins with Looking Closely", which discusses tools to support learners; (2) "Inquiry Demands a Critical Use of Resources"; (3) "Inquiry Invites Exploratory Conversations"; (4) "Inquiry Focuses and Refocuses Investigations", which discusses two instances in which the class focused on a certain intriguing aspect of the larger study; (5) "Inquiry Builds Collaborative Communities"; and (6) "Inquiry Results in Changed Visions", which emphasizes the role of education in offering students views of the world that they could not obtain on their own. Appendices contain sample forms used in field projects as well as both parent and student surveys. Contains 53 references. (PVD)

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